

A GIRL OF THE LIMBERLOST

By
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CHAPTER XXII.

Wherein Philip Ammon is Scorned by Edith Carr, and Hart Henderson Appears on the Scene.

EDITH CARR stood in a vine inclosed side veranda of the Lake Shore clubhouse waiting while Philip Ammon gave some important orders. In a few days she would sail for Paris to select a wonderful trousseau she had planned for her marriage in October. Tonight Philip was giving a club dance in her honor. As she stood waiting she smiled softly. She was robed in a French creation suggested and designed by Philip. He had said to her, "I know a competent judge who says the distinctive feature of June is her exquisite black night moths. I want you to be the very essence of June that night, as you will be the embodiment of love. Be a moth. The most beautiful of them is either the pale green Luna or the yellow Imperial. Be my moon lady or my gold Empress."

Now she stood, tall, lithe, of grace incarnate, her dark waving hair high piled and crossed by gold bands studded with amethysts and at one side an enameled lavender orchid rimmed with diamonds, which flashed and sparkled. The soft yellow robe of lightest weight velvet fitted her form perfectly, while from each shoulder fell a great velvet wing lined with lavender and flecked with embroidery of that color in imitation of the moth. Philip had said that her gloves, fan and slippers must be lavender because the feet of the moth were that color. These accessories had been made to order and embroidered with gold. In her heart she thought of herself as "Imperial Regalia," as the Yellow Empress. But in all the fragrant thought crossing her brain the one that never came was that of Philip Ammon as the emperor, Philip the king of her heart, and at least her equal in all things.

"Ah, my luck!" cried a voice behind her.

Edith Carr turned and smiled exquisitely.

"I thought you were on the ocean," she said.

"I only reached the dock," replied the man, "when I had a letter that recalled me by the first limited. Edith, you are the most superb woman in every respect that I have ever seen. One glimpse is worth the whole journey."

He half closed his eyes and smilingly stared straight at her. He was taller than she, a lean man, with close cropped light hair, steel gray eyes, a square chin and "man of the world" written all over him.

Edith Carr flushed. "I thought you realized when you went away that you were to stop that, Hart Henderson," she cried.

"I did, but this letter of which I tell you called me back to start it all over again. One of your most intimate chums wrote it. It contained the hazard that possibly I had given up too soon. It said that in a fit of petulance you had broken your engagement with Ammon twice this winter, and he had come back because he knew you did not really mean it. I have come back to haunt you until the ceremony is over. Then I go, no more, I was insane!"

The girl laughed merrily. "Not half so insane as you are now, Hart," she cried gayly. "You know that Philip Ammon has been devoted to me all my life. Well, now I'll tell you something else, because this looks serious for you. I love him with all my heart. Not while he lives shall he know it, and I will laugh at him if you tell him, but the fact remains. I intend to marry him, but no doubt I shall tease him constantly. It's good for a man to be uncertain. If you could see Ammon's face at the quarterly return of his ring you would understand the fun of it. My little fits of temper don't count with Phil. He's been waiting on them."

"Just the same I'll wait and see if an accomplished fad," said Henderson. "And, Edith, because I love you with the sort of love it is worth a woman's while to inspire I want your happiness before my own. Go careful from now on. Don't strain that patch of engagement of yours any further. I've known Philip all my life. He loves you, yes! He is long suffering for you, yes! But men know he has a limit. When the limit is reached he will stand fast, and all the powers can't move him. You don't seem to think it, but you can go too far."

"Is that all?" laughed Edith Carr sarcastically.

"No, there is one thing more," said Henderson. "Here or hereafter, now and so long as I breathe, I am your slave. If you need me it is not necessary to speak; only give me the faintest sign. All your life I will be somewhere near you waiting for it."

At that instant Philip Ammon entered. He was in full evening dress and exceptionally handsome. "Everything is ready," he said. "They are waiting for us to lead the march. It is formed." Edith Carr smiled entrancingly. "Do you think I am ready?"

Philip looked what he thought and offered his arm. Edith Carr nodded carelessly to Henderson and moved away.

The last half of the program was well under way. Never had girl been more complimented and petted in the same length of time than Edith Carr. A partners' dance was called and the floor was filled with couples waiting for the music. Ammon stood whispering delightful things to Edith facing him. From out of the night, in at the wide front entrance to the pavilion there swept in slow, wavering flight a great yellow moth and fluttered toward

the center cluster of glaring electric lights. "Why, isn't that?" she began excitedly. "It's a yellow Empress! This is late!" cried Ammon. "The last one Elvira needs for her collection. I must have it! Excuse me!"

He ran toward the light. "Hats! Handkerchiefs! Fans! Anything!" he panted. "Every one hold up something and stop that!"

"He wants it for Edith!" ran in a murmur around the hall. The girl's face flushed, while she bit her lip in vexation. Instantly every one began holding up something to keep the moth from flying back into the light. One fan held straight before it served, and the moth gently settled on it.

"Hold steady!" cried Ammon. "Don't move for your life!" He rushed toward the moth, made a quick sweep and held it up between his fingers. "All right!" he called. "Thanks, every one! Excuse me a minute."

He ran to the office. "An ounce of gasoline, quick!" he ordered. "A cigar box, a cork and the glue bottle."

He poured some glue into the bottom of the box, set the cork in it firmly, dashed the gasoline over the moth repeatedly, pinned it to the cork, poured the remainder of the liquid over it, closed the box and fastened it. Then he laid a bill on the counter.

"Pack that box with cork around it in one twice its size, tie securely and express to this address at once."

"Keep the change," called Ammon as he ran back to the pavilion.

Edith Carr stood where he left her, thinking rapidly. She heard the murmur that went up when Philip started to capture the exquisite golden creature she was impersonating. She saw the flash of surprise that went over untroubled faces when he ran from the room without even showing it to her.

He had spoken of a country girl he had met who played the violin wonderfully, and at times he had showed a disposition to exalt her as a standard of womanhood. Miss Carr had ignored what he said and talked of something else. It was that girl who was collecting moths! No doubt she was the competent judge who was responsible for the yellow costume Philip had devised. Had Edith Carr been in her room she would have torn off the dress at the thought.

Being in a circle of her best friends, which to her meant her keenest rivals and hardest critics, she grew rigid with anger. Her breath hurt her painful chest. No one thought to speak to the musicians, and seeing the floor filled, they began to wait.

Edith Carr grew very white as she stood alone. The isolated only daughter of the Carr family hoped that she would drop dead from mortification, but nothing happened. She was too perverse to step aside laughingly and say that she was waiting for Philip.

Then came Tom Levering dancing with Polly Ammon. Being in the scales with the Ammon family, Tom seemed trouble from afar, so he whispered to Polly, "Edith is standing in the middle of the floor, and she's awful mad about something."

They hurried to Edith. "Come, dear," said Polly. "We are going to wait with you until Phil gets back. Let's go for a drink. I am so thirsty!"

"My betrothed left me here," Edith said. "Here I shall remain until he returns for me, and then—be will be my betrothed no longer!"

Polly grasped Edith's arm. "Oh, Edith," she implored. "Don't make a scene here, and tonight. He can explain! It's only a breath since I saw him go out. I thought he had returned."

"He has been gone just long enough to show every one of his guests that he will leave me standing alone, like a neglected fool, for any passing whim of his. Explain! His explanation would sound well! Do you know for whom he caught that moth? It is being sent to a girl he dined with last summer!"

Speech unloosed the fountain. She stripped off her gloves to free her hands. At that instant the dancers parted to admit Philip. Instinctively they stopped as they approached and with wondering faces waited in Edith and Philip, Polly and Tom.

"Mighty good of you to wait!" cried Ammon, his face beaming with delight over his success in capturing the yellow Empress. "I thought when I heard the music you were going on."

"How did you think I was going on?" demanded Edith Carr in frigid tones.

"I thought you would step aside and wait a few seconds for me or dance with Henderson. It was most important to have that moth. It just completes a valuable collection for a person who needs the money. Come!"

He held out his arms. "I step aside for no one!" stormed Edith Carr. "I await no other girl's pleasure! You may 'complete the collection' with that!"

She drew her engagement ring from her finger and reached to place it in one of Philip's outstretched hands. Ammon saw and drew back. Instantly Edith dropped the ring. As it fell, almost instinctively Philip caught it in his hand.

"Edith, for the love of mercy, wait until I can explain!" he begged. "Put on your ring and let me tell you how it is."

"Never! Your conduct is infamous!" "Come to think of it," said Ammon deliberately. "It is infamous to cut a girl who has danced all her life out of a few measures of a waltz. As for asking forgiveness for so black a sin as picking up a moth and starting it to a friend who lives by collecting them I don't see how I could. I have not been gone three minutes by the clock, Edith. Put on your ring and finish the dance like a dear girl."

He thrust the glittering ruby into her fingers and again held out his arms. She dropped the ring, and it rolled some distance from them. Henderson followed its shining course and caught it before it was lost.

"You really mean it?" demanded Ammon in a voice as cold as hers ever had been. "You know I mean it!" cried Edith Carr. "I accept your decision in the presence of these witnesses," said Philip Ammon.

"Where is my father?" he asked of those around them. The older Ammon, with a distressed face, hurried to him. "Father, take my place," said Philip. "Excuse me to my guests. Ask all my friends to forgive me. I am going out for a time."

He turned and walked from the pavilion. As he went Hart Henderson rushed to Edith Carr and forced the ring into her fingers. "Edith, quick! Come, quick!" he implored. "There's just time to catch him. If you let him go that way he never will return in this world. Remember what I told you."

"Great prophet, aren't you, Hart?" she sneered. "Who wants him to return? If that ring is thrust upon me I'll accept your decision in the presence of these witnesses."



"I accept your decision in the presence of these witnesses."

again I shall fling it into the lake. Signal the musicians to begin and take this dance with me."

Henderson put the ring into his pocket and began the dance. He could feel the muscular spasms of the girl in his arms, her face was cold and hard, but her breath burned with the scorch of fever. She finished the dance and all others, taking Philip's numbers with Henderson, who had arrived too late to arrange a program. She left with the others, merely inclining her head as she passed Ammon's father taking his place, and entered the big touring car for which Henderson had telephoned.

She sank limply into a seat and moaned softly.

"Shall I drive awhile in the night air?" asked Henderson.

She nodded. Henderson instructed the chauffeur.

She raised her head in a few seconds. "Hart, I'm going to pieces," she said. "Won't you put your arm around me a little while?"

Henderson gathered her into his arms and her head fell on his shoulder. "Closer," she cried.

Dawn was streaking the east when he spoke to her.

"It is growing light."

"Take me home," she said.

Henderson helped her up the steps and rang the bell.

"Miss Carr is ill," he said to the footman. "Rouse her maid instantly and have her prepare something hot as quickly as possible."

"Edith," he cried, "just a word. I have been thinking. It isn't too late yet. Take your ring and put it on. I will go and find Phil at once and tell him you have that you are expecting him, and he will come."

"Think what he said!" she cried. "He accepted my decision as final in the presence of witnesses as if it were court. He can return to me if I ever wear it again."

"You think that now, but in a few days you will find that you feel very differently. Living a life of heartache is no joke and no job for a woman. Put on your ring and send me to tell him to come. I know Phil, and I know you went too far. Put on that ring and send him word you are sorry before it is too late."

"I will not! He shall come to me!" "Then God help you!" said Henderson, "for you are plunging into misery whose depth you do not dream."

She swayed where she stood. Her maid opened the door and caught her. Henderson went down the hall and out to his car.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Wherein Edith Carr Experiences Regrets and Philip Returns to the Limberlost.

PHILIP AMMON walked from among his friends a humiliated and a wounded man. Dawn was near when he reached home, but the first door was lighted. He staggered up the steps and was instantly admitted. The library door stood open, while his father sat with a book pretending to read. At Philip's entrance the father scarcely glanced up.

"Come on!" he called. "I have just told Banks to bring me a cup of coffee before I turn in. Have one with me!"

"Father," said Philip, "may I talk with you a little while?"

"Of course," answered Mr. Ammon. "I am not at all tired. I think I must have been waiting in the hope that you would come. I want no one's version of this but yours. Tell me the straight of the thing, Phil."

Philip told all he knew, while his father sat in deep thought. "The friend for whom you wanted the moth is a girl!" he asked.

"The girl of whom I wrote you last summer and told you about in the fall. I helped her all the time I was away."

"Did Edith know of her?"

"I tried many times to tell her, but she was so indifferent that she was insulting. She would not hear me."

"Who is this girl, just what is she doing and what is she like?"

Philip gave a man's version of the previous summer.

"You are very sure as to her religious and education?" he asked.

"In almost two months' daily association could a man be mistaken? She can far and away beat Polly, Edith or any girl of our set on any common, high school or supplementary branch. She has the biggest, tenderest, most human heart I ever knew in a girl."

The book leaves slid rapidly through his fingers as the father drawled. "What sort of looking girl is she?"

"Tall as Edith, a little heavier, pink, even complexion, wide open blue gray eyes with heavy black brows and lashes so long they touch her cheeks. She has a rope of waving, shining hair that makes a real crown on her head, and it appears almost red in the light. She is as handsome as any fair woman I ever saw, but she doesn't know it."

"And you were in daily association two months with a girl like that! How about it, Phil?"

"If you mean did I trifle with her, no!" cried Philip hotly. "I told her the second time I met her all about Edith. I never met any girl so downright noble in bearing and actions. I never hated anything as I hated leaving her, for we were dear friends, like two wholly congenial men."

"Yet you left such a girl and came back whole hearted to Edith Carr?"

"Surely! You know how it has been with me about Edith all my life."

"Yet the girl you picture is far her superior to an unprejudiced person, when thinking what a man would require in a wife to be happy."

"I never have thought what I would require to be happy. I only thought whether I could make Edith happy. I have been an idiot. What I've borne you'll never know. Tonight is only one of many outbursts like that, in varying and lesser degrees."

"Phil, I love you, when you say you have thought only of Edith. I happen to know that it is true. In some ways tonight would be a blessed release if you could take it; but you cannot. Go to bed now and get some rest. Tomorrow go back to her and fix it up."

"You heard what I said when I left her. I said it because something in my heart died a minute before that, and I realized that it was my love for Edith Carr. Sir, it is true that I have thought only of her up to the present. Now I will admit I am thinking about myself. Father, did you see her? Life is too short, and it can be too sweet to throw away in a battle with an untroubled woman. I am no fighter—where a girl is concerned, anyway. Could you spare me a few days? I wonder if I could not hide at Uncle Ed's in Wisconsin for awhile?"

"Phil, are you sure of what you just have said?"

"Death cannot return to life, father. My love for Edith Carr is dead. I hope never to see her again. Let us not speak of it further."

"Then, Phil," the father leaned closer and looked at the son tenderly. "Phil, why don't you go to the Limberlost?"

"Father?"

"Why not? No one can comfort a hurt heart like a tender woman; and, Phil, have you ever stopped to think that you may have a duty in the Limberlost if you are free? She might care to see you. You can soon tell."

A long time Philip Ammon sat in deep thought. At last he raised his head.

"Well, why not?" he said. "Years could make me no surer than I am now, and life is short. Please ask Banks to get me some coffee and toast, and I will bathe and dress so I can take the early train."

"Go to your bath. I will attend to your packing and everything. And Phil, if I were you I would leave no addresses."

"Not an address!" said Ammon. "Not even for Polly."

When the train pulled out the elder Ammon went home to find Hart Henderson waiting.

"Where is Phil?" he demanded.

"He did not feel like facing his friends at present, and I am just back from driving him to the station. He said he might go to Slim or Patagonia. He would leave no addresses."

Henderson almost staggered. "He's not gone—and left no address? You don't mean it! He'll never forgive her!"

"Never is a long time, Hart," said Mr. Ammon. "And it seems even longer to those of us who are well acquainted with Phil. Last night was not the last straw. It was the whole straw stack. It crushed Phil so far as she is concerned."

Twice Henderson opened his lips to speak of Edith Carr's despair. Twice he looked into the stern, inflexible face of Mr. Ammon and could not betray her. He held out the ring.

"He gave no instructions as to that," said the elder Ammon, drawing back. "Possibly Miss Carr would have it as a keepsake."

"I am sure not," said Henderson curtly.

"Then suppose you return it to Peacock. I will phone him. He will give you the price of it, and you might add it to the children's fresh air fund."

"As you choose," said Henderson. "Good morning!"

Then he went to his home, but he could not think of sleep. He ordered breakfast, but he could not eat. He paced the library for a time, but it was too small. Going out on the streets he walked until exhausted, then he called a hansom and was driven to his club. As he sauntered into the room an attendant hurried to him.

"You are wanted most urgently at the phone, Mr. Henderson," he said. "You have had three calls from Main 5770."

Henderson shivered as he picked down the receiver and gave the call.

"Is that you, Hart?" came Edith's voice.

"Yes."

"Did you find Phil?"

"No; he has been home and gone again."

"Gone?"

"The cry tore Henderson's heart. 'Shall I come and tell you, Edith?' 'No. Tell me now.'"

"When I got to the house Banks said Mr. Ammon and Phil were out in the motor, so I waited. Mr. Ammon came back soon. Edith, are you alone?"

"Yes. Go on."

"Call your maid. I can't tell you until some one is with you."

"Tell me instantly!"

"Edith, he said he had been to the station. He said Phil had started to Slim or Patagonia, he didn't know which, and left no address. He said—"

"Distinctly Henderson heard her fall. He set the buzzer ringing and in a few seconds heard voices, so he knew she had been found. Then he crept into a private den and shook with a hard, nervous chill."

The next day Edith Carr started on her trip to Europe. Henderson felt certain she hoped to meet Philip there. He was sure she would be disappointed, though he had no idea where Ammon could have gone. But after much thought he decided he would see Edith soonest by remaining at home, so he spent the summer in Chicago.

"Elvira," said Mrs. Comstock, "there's some one coming down the road."

"Coming here, do you think?"

"Yes; coming here, I suspect."

Elvira glanced quickly at her mother and then turned to the road as Philip Ammon reached the gate.

"Careful, mother," the girl instantly warned. "If you change your treatment of him a hair's breadth he will suspect. Come with me to meet him."

She dropped her work and sprang up. "Well, of all the delightful surprises!" she cried.

She was a trifle thinner than during the previous summer. On her face there was a more mature, patient look. He caught both hands where she offered but one.

"Elvira," he cried, "if you were engaged to me and we were at a ball among hundreds where I offended you very much and didn't even know I had done anything and if I asked you before all of them to allow me to explain, to forgive me, to wait, would your face grow distorted and unfamiliar with anger? Would you drop my ring on the floor and insult me repeatedly? Oh, Elvira, would you?"

Elvira's big eyes seemed to leap, while her face grew very white. She wrenched away her hands.

"Hush, Phil, hush!" she protested. "That fever has you again! You are dreadfully ill. You don't know what you are saying."

"I am sleepless and exhausted; I'm heart sick, but I am well as I ever was. Answer me, Elvira, would you?"

"Answer nothing!" cried Mrs. Comstock. "Hang your coat there on your nail, Phil, and come split some kindling. Elvira, clean away that stuff and set the table. Can't you see the boy is starved and tired? He's come home to rest and get a decent meal. Come on, Phil."

They prepared and ate supper. Afterward they sat in the arbor and talked, or Elvira played until time for Ammon to go.

"Will you walk to the gate with me?" he asked Elvira as he arose.

"Not tonight," she answered lightly. "Come early in the morning if you like, and we will go over to Sleepy Snake creek and hunt moths and gather dandelions for dinner."

Ammon leaned toward her. "May I tell you tomorrow why I came?" he asked.

"I think not," replied Elvira. "The fact is I don't care why you came. It is enough for me that we are your very good friends and that in trouble you have found us a refuge. I fancy we had better live a week or two before you say anything. There is a possibility that you have to say may change in that length of time."

"It will not change one iota!" cried Ammon.

"Then it will have the grace of that much age to give it some small touch of favor," said the girl. "Come early in the morning."

She lifted the violin and began to play a dainty fairy dance.

"Well, bless my soul!" softly ejaculated the astounded Mrs. Comstock. "To think I was worrying for fear you couldn't take care of yourself!"

Elvira laughed as she played. The month which followed was a repetition of the previous June, with moth hunts, specimen gathering and perfect nights filled with music, save that Philip was now Elvira's avowed suitor. Edith Carr, sick at heart, sailed for Europe. At the end of a month Philip asked Elvira to be his wife, but she pleaded for more time, saying she must be absolutely sure of herself and of him before she could say yes. But she consented to wear a beautiful emerald ring which he had had sent from Chicago.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

WHAT HAPPENED IN VERMONT.
(From the Boston Transcript.)

In view of the consensus of opinion of trained political and journalistic observers who in the past few weeks have made a careful study of the situation in the Green Mountain State, only the expected happened in Vermont yesterday. That there would be no election by the people, that the choice of governor would be thrown into the Legislature and that the Legislature would be heavily republican has been the tenor of all predictions for a considerable time past. Yesterday's voting confirmed these predictions to a remarkable degree. The republicans have a plurality but not a majority for their candidate for governor. In the Legislature they will have a majority over all parties, a majority so emphatic that it will prevent any coalition being formed between the Third Party men and the democrats to place one of their number in the executive chamber at Montpelier. Mr. Fletcher is as sure of being inaugurated governor next month as he could be had he received an old-time republican majority. The republicans carried both congressional districts with the utmost ease.

The balloting was sympathetic with the course of the pre-convention campaign in Vermont. Then it will be remembered, Roosevelt got two out of the eight delegates the State sent to Chicago. That Roosevelt minority was the reason of the Third Party vote yesterday. That vote in turn reflects conditions which Roosevelt has admirably organized. There has been a floating feeling of unrest among the republicans of Vermont running back several years. Insurgency could not be said to exist in that State in any organized form, but it was grouping its way to organization when the Third Term candidate entered the field last spring. Finally, or wrongly, many republicans got the impression that money was counting for too much in their State. These critics said that the governorship was going to wealthy men because those of moderate means could not "pay the freight."

The last State campaign left much bitterness in its trail. Again, the Vermont farmers, being near neighbors of the Canadian farmers, were much offended by President Taft's reciprocity policy; and, however, moreover, there is in some of the industrial towns of Vermont a tendency to Socialism among laboring men. Mixing these elements of discontent together and putting at the head of his ticket a country clergyman, Roosevelt made an appeal to republican dissatisfaction. The result must be disappointing to him, in spite of what he may say upon reading the figures of such an election. That he happens to be addressing in an election at which but half of the registered voters of the State were cast only about one-third of the republicans voting followed his banner. If he calculated on breaking into the democratic strength he is again disappointed, for the democrats really made small but still definite gains on their vote of two years ago. If he is to raise his party throughout the country to portentous figures he must do better in other States than he has done in Vermont. The proportion that he drew from the republicans there would not count for much in States where the republicans can roll up more votes than there are inhabitants in Vermont.

It is the custom to call Vermont a barometrical State, but we need not attach much importance to such a saying. There are communities in which President Taft's reciprocity ideas exert an influence directly opposite to that they exercised among Vermont farmers. There is a great fighting area throughout the country open to republicans, who should enter it to achieve the success of their principles and who should see in Vermont simply a stimulus to renewed exertion for the success of their party ticket.

WHERE GERMANY FAILED.
British Criticism of Imperial Diplomacy Since Death of Bismarck.

An article in one of the current British reviews takes the astonishing ground that German imperial diplomacy since Bismarck's death has been a failure. It is conceded